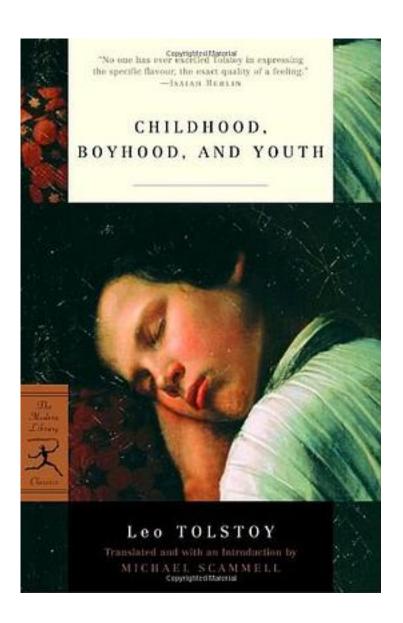
Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth



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Written from 1852 to 1856, this autobiographical novel was Tolstoy's first publication. The early life of Nikolai, the son of wealthy landowner in Russia, is fully explored, slowly revealing this young boy's inner mind, relationships, and social standing. As he describes his tutor, angelic mother, aloof father, worldly brother, and later his moralistic friend, Nikolai displays a mind given to dreaming and a personality as complex as it is conflicted. As he grows and moves from his country home to his grandmother's mansion in Moscow, Nikolai also struggles at intervals to find a sort of moral balance, which affects his love, his education, and the type of man he might become. Tolstoy demonstrates, even in this first literary attempt, his ability to utilize a host of minor characters to fully develop the internal life of his main character. "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth" shows in its three parts not only the deliberate building of a protagonist but also a universal story about coming of age. This novel has proven itself to be a seminal work for an extraordinary povelist.

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